

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 MMS-01 PM-03 L-03 EB-07

CU-02 INR-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00 ACDA-05 AGR-05 AID-05

COME-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 OPIC-03 PC-01 TRSE-00 USIA-06

PER-01 ARAE-00 /083 W

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P 221530Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7524

S E C R E T MANAGUA 2823

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XM, US, NU

SUBJECT: NICARAGUA, VS. COSTA RICA CASP

REF: A-4679; MANAGUA 2149

1. MANAGUA COUNTRY TEAM HAS JUST REVIEWED A COPY OF THE COSTA RICA CASP APPROVED AT THE NSC-IG/ARA LEVEL AND AFTER READING IT IS MORE PUZZLED THAN EVER ABOUT THE PRE-IG TREATMENT OF THE NICARAGUAN CASP (REFTEL, WITH PARTICULAR REGARD TO WASHINGTON'S REACTION TO OUR RESPECTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS ON "WORLD ORDER".

2. BOTH MANAGUA AND SAN JOSE CITED THEIR HOST GOVERNMENTS' RESPONSE TO LATIN AMERICAN SOLIDARITY AND THIRD WORLD PRESURES AS MAJOR ISSUES WHICH THE U.S. WOULD HAVE TO CONTEND WITH DURING THE NEXT FEW YEARS. BOTH EMBASSIES ALSO CITED THEIR HOST COUNTRIES' INTERNATIONAL BEHAVIOR AS REPRESENTING ONE OF OUR MAJOR INTERESTS. HOWEVER, WHILE SAN JOSE'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INCLUSION OF THESE POINTS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY WASHINGTON, MANAGUA'S SIMILAR, NEARLY IDENTICAL, RECOMMENDATIONS WERE EXCLUDED, DOWNGRADED, OR OTHERWISE REVISED. THE ONLY SIGNIFICANT VARIATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO PRESENTATIONS WHICH WE DISCERNED WERE A) THE CLAIM THAT COSTA RICA HAD A DISPROPORTIONATE

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AMOUNT OF PRESTIGE IN THE WORLD OWING TO ITS DEMOCRATIC ORIENTATION

AND B) COSTA RICA HAS ALREADY BEGUN ITS SLIDE AWAY FROM ITS TRADITIONAL POSITION OF SUPPORT FOR THE U.S. IT IS NOT OUR PURPOSE TO DEPRECATE EMBASSY SAN JOSE'S NET ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF COSTA RICAN CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD ORDER--INDEED, WE FIND ITS INCLUSION REASONABLE AND CONVINCING. BUT IT DOES SEEM TO US THAT IF THE DECISION TO ACCEPT WORLD ORDER AS AN ISSUE AND PRIORITY INTEREST IN THE COSTA RICAN CONTEXT AND REJECT IT IN THE NICARAGUAN CONTEXT WAS MADE ON THE BASIS OF THESE DIFFERENCES, THE PRE-IG HAS MADE AN INVIDIOUS DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

3. NICARAGUA'S GLOBAL PRESTIGE MAY NOT BE VERY HIGH, BUT WE SHARPLY QUESTION WHETHER ITS RELATIVE STANDING IS ANY DIFFERENT FROM ITS NEIGHBORS. WE DOUBT WHETHER INTERNATIONAL PRESTIGE DERIVES FROM INTERNAL POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS, AND IF IT DID, IT COULD BE ARGUED THAT NICARAGUA WHICH HAS A POLITICAL SYSTEM MUCH CLOSER TO THE NORM FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE THIRD WORLD OUGHT TO ENJOY GREATER PRESTIGE THAN COSTA RICA FOR ITS REPRESENTATIVENESS ALONE. UNFORTUNATELY, POLITICAL FREEDOM AND INDIVIDUAL LIBERTIES ARE NOT HIGHLY PRIZED COMMODITIES AMONG THE GROUP WE SEEK TO INFLUENCE AND WITH REGARD TO THE REMAINING FACTORS, GEOGRAPHY, SIZE, AND NATURAL RESOURCES, WE FIND IT DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT ANY DISTINCTION CAN BE DRAWN AMONG NICARAGUA, COSTA RICA OR THE OTHER THREE CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES.

4. IF NONE OF THE FIVE CASTS MUCH OF A SHADOW ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE (ALTHOUGH BUILDING ON FAMILY, POLITICAL AND BUSINESS CONNECTIONS THROUGHOUT THE YEARS SOMOZA MAINTAINS SOME IMPRESSIVE CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION WITH MANY NATIONAL LEADERS), A STRONG ARGUMENT COULD BE MADE THAT LEAST WITHIN-IN THE SMALLER POOL OF CENTRAL AMERICAN, NICARAGUA, I.E., SOMOZA, IS SOMETHING OF A BIG FISH OWING TO ITS STATUS AS SENIOR INTER PARES OF FOUR OF THE FIVE GOVERNMENTS WHICH ARE MILITARY-ORIENTED. IN THIS GROUP, COSTA RICA APPEARS ALMOST AS AN EXOTIC, STRIKINGLY DIFFERENT AND NOT QUITE TRUSTED BY THE OTHERS. EVEN AMONG ANTI-MILITARISTS IN THE OTHER FOUR COUNTRIES--IF THE NICARAGUAN OPPOSITION IS ANY GUAGE--COSTA RICA'S IMAGE HAS BEEN BADLY TARNISHED BY THE VESCO IMBROGLIO AND ITS CALLOUS TREATMENT OF POLITICAL ASYLEES.

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5. WE READILY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT COSTA RICAN PRESTIGE MAY BE MUCH HIGHER THAN THAT OF NICARAGUA'S IN THE UNITED STATES WHERE A DEMOCRATICALLY ORIENTED PEOPLE HAVE A NATURAL SYMPATHY FOR A SMALL COUNTRY WITH DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS, AND WHERE, THEREFORE, COSTA RICA'S EJECTION FROM U.S. POSITIONS ON FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES MAY CAUSE GREATER ANGUISH THAN THAT OF SOME OTHER COUNTRIES. WE HOPE, HOWEVER, THAT

WASHINGTON POLICY-MAKERS WILL NOT CONFUSE THIS SENTIMENTAL ATTACHMENT WITH GENUINE VALUE TO OUR FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES. WHETHER, FOR EXAMPLE, COSTA RICAN FOREIGN MINISTER FACIO'S ADMITTEDLY MORE ACTIVIST WHEELINGS AND DEALINGS ARE MORE VALUABLE THAN SOMOZA'S QUIET RELIABILITY WHEN THE CHIPS ARE DOWN IS NOT A POINT THAT WE WOULD CARE TO DEBATE, BUT NEITHER IS IT A POINT WHICH WASHINGTONN SHOULD BE SO QUICK TO DECIDE. WE WOULD SUMIT THAT AS A MINIMUM POSITION, A NICARAGUAN VOTE IN AN INTERNATIONAL FORUM IS EQUIVALENT TO A COSTA RICAN VOTE AND THAT THE ISSUE FOR BOTH COUNTRIES IS HOW TO RETAIN THEIR VOTES IN THE FACT OF SIMILAR PRESSURES FOR THEM TO DO OTHERWISE.

6. FOR BASICALLY THE SAME REASONS, THE STAGE OF DISAFFECTION FROM U.S.-BACKED POSITION IN WHICH THE TWO COUNTRIES FIND THEMSELVES DOES NOT SEEM TO BE A CONVINCING FOUNDATION UPON WHICH TO CONSTRUCT AN ARGUMENT WHICH DISCRIMINATES BETWEEN THE TWO. ALTHOUGH NICARAGUA'S ALIENATION IS MORE POTENTIAL THAN COSTA RICA, FURTHER EROSION OF SUPPORT IN EITHER PLACE OUGHT TO BE CONSIDERED AS EQUALLY DETRIMENTAL TO OUR INTERESTS. TO DENY THIS IS ONLY TO INDILGE AND ENCOURAGE THE SQUEAKY WHEEL ARGUMENT WITH ALL OF ITS PRDICTABLE SELF-DEFEATING CONSEQUENCES.

7. NOW MORE THAN EVER, WE AGAIN ASK THAT CHANGES IN THE NICARAGUAN CASP MADE AT THE PRE-IG WITH REGARD TO WORLD ORDER BE RECONSIDERED IN ORDER TO BESTOW UPON THE NICARAGUAN SITUATION THE SAME DEGREE OF CONCERN AS ITS NEIGHBORS.

8. SIMULTANEOUS TO THE DRAFTING OS THIS MESSAGE WE RECEIVED STATE A-4679. DEPARTMENT MAINTAINS THAT EFFECTS OF THIRD COUNTRY PRESSURES UNLIKELY TO CAUSE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN
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NICARAGUAN FOREIGN POLICY DURING CASP PERIOD AND, THEREFORE, NOT ISSUE. WE THINK THAT ARGUMENTATION USED BY DEPT SOMEWHAT DISINGENUOUS, BUT AS WE STATED PREVIOOUSLY, CT FEELS LESS STRONGLY ABOUT INCLUSION OF WORLD ORDER TOPIC AS ISSUE THAN IN IDENTIFYING IT AS A MAJOR INTERST. IN SPIRIT OF COMPROMISE, WE RECOMMEND THAT DEPT SUPPORT THIS POSITION. IN VIEW OF ITS FAILURE TO ADDRESS ALL OF THE POINTS RAISED IN MANAGUA 2149, MAY WE ASSUME THAT STATE 170807 IS A PARITAL OR PRELIMINARY REPLY TO MANAGUA 2149?

9. FOR ARA/CEN. PLEASE BRIEF AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE THEBERGE FULLY ON THIS ISSUE.
SHELTON

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NNN

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